

Study 15: 2nd Timothy Chapter 1

Introduction

The second letter begins with Paul's usual authoritative greetings. He then begins the first round of appeals, with his loyalty to the gospel despite his circumstances, and a contrast to those who have fallen away and rejected the gospel.

Body of the Study

Introduction and Greetings

Thanksgiving

First Appeal to Loyalty

First appeal – defection

Homework and preparation for next week:

- *Read the notes as a review of the study*
- *Read chapter 2 in preparation for the next study.*

- *When Paul was in prison, very few (or none) of the christians in Rome came to visit him. How is Paul feeling about this? How is this situation reflected in what he wrote in this chapter?*
- *Paul was in physical imprisonment. What other forms of “imprisonment” might we find ourselves in that cause us to be ashamed of the gospel? How should we react in these circumstances? How can we be like Onesiphorus and help those who are suffering because of the gospel?*

Notes for study 15: 2nd Timothy Chapter 1

The second letter begins with Paul's usual authoritative greetings. He then begins the first round of appeals, with his loyalty to the gospel despite his circumstances, and a contrast to those who have fallen away and rejected the gospel.

Introduction and Greetings

In the introduction, Paul asserts his apostleship to Timothy, who he describes as "... *my dear son...*" (2:1:2). Timothy had no need to be instructed about Paul's identity and authority, and in asserting his apostleship he is saying that the things that he is writing are not a *social letter* to his friend Timothy, but are authoritative, and has come from God.

Paul's instructions as an apostle come "...*by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus...*" (2:1:1 NKJV). His use of "life" in this passage has the dual reference to the eternal and spiritual life that we have through Jesus, and also a reflection on Paul's current situation. He had lived a life of devotion and sacrifice for the sake of the gospel, and yet despite being in a Roman prison facing a death sentence, he was able to focus on the blessings of his life in Christ.

Paul adds the word *mercy* to his usual greeting of *grace and peace*. It appears only here and in 1st Timothy (1:1:2). This provides evidence of the authenticity of the letter, as someone who was writing the letter and purporting that Paul had written it would never have departed from Paul's consistent greeting by introducing something else.

Thanksgiving

Paul follows his usual style with a thanksgiving following after the initial greeting. He reflects on his life of service to God "...*whom I serve with a pure conscience...*" (2:1:3 NKJV). Like Timothy, Paul had strong ancestry in the Jewish religion "...*as my forefathers did...*" (2:1:3).

He had not forgotten about his long time associate, "...*as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day...*" (2:1:3 NKJV), and was "...*greatly desiring to see him...that he might be filled with joy...*" (2:1:4). Paul discusses how he is Timothy's tears, however we have no information as to when this occasion might have been. It could have been on the occasion when Paul was stoned in Lystra (Acts 14:19), or perhaps when Paul had his discussion with the elders in Antioch (Acts 20:37).

Like Paul (2:1:3), Timothy's faith was grounded in his family. His mother and his grandmother were devout Jews, although his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). "...*I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also...*" (2:1:5 NKJV).

First Appeal to Loyalty

Timothy is urged to "...*stir up the gift of God which is in you...*" (2:1:6 NKJV), or "...*fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you...*" (NIV). This does not mean that Timothy had neglected the gift, or was not using to its full extent, but rather to continue to use them.

The gift came "...*through the laying on of my hands...*" (2:1:6). Paul is referring here to the miraculous gifts, which God had imparted through him (as an apostle – c/f Acts 8:17-18). This was not the sign of appointment that came through the laying on of the hands of the elders (1:4:14).

Timothy should not be afraid to exercise this gift "...*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind...*" (2:1:7 NKJV). The Holy Spirit came with power on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4), and this contrasts against a *spirit of timidity* (NIV). The

Holy Spirit brought *the Power of God unto salvation* with the gospel (Rom 1:16), and through it we are empowered to declare and teach it to others.

Because of this empowerment, Paul says “...*So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God...*” (2:1:8 NIV). There is a hint in this passage (and in others in the two letters) that Timothy might have had a timid nature, and needed the encouragement of Paul to go out and *do the work of an evangelist* (2:4:5). But Timothy has been empowered with the gospel, and through the medium of the Holy Spirit he had the miraculous gifts. These did not come from Paul, but from God, and demonstrated the power of God. It was God who:

- *Saved us,*
- *Called us with a holy calling,*
- *Not according to our works,*
- *But according to His grace,*
- *Which was given to us in Christ Jesus*
- *Before time began (2:1:9 NKJV)*

Here we see God’s eternal purpose being revealed. Even before the world was created, God pre-determined that salvation was going to come through Jesus Christ. It came not because we had deserved it (ie by earning it through works), but when we didn’t deserve it (ie by Grace). Paul here reveals for us the pre-existence of Jesus Christ before the world began (c/f Jn 1:1-3).

In previous times (ie under the Old Testament dispensation), God’s plan of salvation through Jesus had not been revealed, “...*but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ...*” (2:1:10 NKJV). From the context, Paul is explicitly discussing the first coming of the Lord, not the Second Coming here. When he came he “...*abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...*” (2:1:10 NKJV). Death has not been *actually* abolished yet (as is obvious, since people are still dying). But through the resurrection, Jesus showed His power over death, and because of His resurrection, we can be assured of our resurrection (1 Cor 15:12-17). Because of Christ’s resurrection (He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead – Rom 1:4) we are made free from sin, and have spiritual life and eternal life. After our resurrection comes the eternal life and immortality. This only comes through the gospel.

To bring the gospel to others, Paul “...*was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles...*” (2:1:11 NKJV). He clearly identifies the multiple roles that he has here. He was not just an apostle, but also was appointed as a preacher. And not just a preacher, but also as a teacher. And although he taught the Jews, he was specifically given the role of teaching Gentiles.

Despite the sufferings that Paul had had in his life – and those he was currently enduring in prison in Rome – he was not ashamed of the gospel. “...*That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day...*” (2:1:12 NIV).

Just as Paul was faithful in teaching the gospel despite the suffering, so Timothy was encouraged to remain faithful in the things that he was teaching, and “...*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus...*” (2:1:13 NKJV).

Finally, Timothy is exhorted to “...*Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us...*” (2:1:14 NIV). Paul had entrusted the gospel to Timothy, and he was to ensure that it was taught to others. The Holy Spirit would help him in his work.

First appeal – defection

In the first appeal, Paul now turns to the contrast of those who had turned away from the gospel, and had hindered its work. Timothy was aware of the situation, and Paul reminds him of two of

them – Phygellus and Hermogenes. He is referring to those in the Roman province of Asia Minor, which included Ephesus. Paul writes “...*that all those in Asia have turned away from me...*” (2:1:15 NKJV) which seems to be a reference to a larger number having deserted the faith. We don’t know anything else about them, except that to have deserted Paul they must have been one of his friends in the first place.

In contrast to those who had deserted Paul, Onesiphorus had looked very hard to find Paul when he arrived in Rome. Paul must have been in a place that was not easy to find (although “tradition” has him in the dungeon of the Maritime prison, this verse would suggest that he may have been somewhere less obvious). Despite Paul’s circumstances, and the possible consequences of being associated with him (also being condemned and put to death), Onesiphorus “...*often refreshed Paul and was not ashamed of his chains...*” (2:1:16). Not only did he find Paul, but visited often.

Timothy was well acquainted with Onesiphorus, for Paul reminds him that “... you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus...” (2:1:18).

Paul concludes the first appeal with the contrast of loyalty in the next chapter.